The Chastening of the Lord.

Bishop of Truro.

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For Mrs Dreyer

"THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD."

FOUR BIBLE READINGS GIVEN AT ST. PETER'S, EATON SQUARE,

BY THE

RT. REV. GEORGE H. WILKINSON, D.D.

BISHOP OF TRURO.

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To the Sick and Suffering
of St. Peter's, Eaton Square,
the following Addresses
are
Affectionately Dedicated
by
their former Vicar,

Georg: H. Truron.

"THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD."

I.

FRIDAY EVENING, 25th JUNE, 1880.

HEBREWS XII. 5, 6, 7. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

I PROPOSE, my brethren, to take these words to-day, not with their context, but in their more general application, as in the Service for the "Visitation of the Sick;" as a message to all persons who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. "These words are written in Holy Scripture for our comfort and instruction; that we should patiently, and with thanksgiving, bear our Heavenly FATHER's correction, whensoever by any manner of adversity it shall please His gracious goodness to visit us."

Let us not narrow this comprehensive interpretation,—"*any* manner of adversity." In body, soul, and spirit, man is made capable of suffering. We suffer with the body, in physical pain. We suffer with the heart, when its affections are wounded or blighted. We suffer with the mind, when the dark mists of unbelief surround us; or when the consciousness of failing powers of concentration and reflection forces itself upon us with a depressing influence. We suffer with the spirit, when the powers of evil are permitted to assail us; at those periods in the spiritual life when, either through GOD's direct ordering, or through His permission, "He maketh darkness that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move." Every form of trial, great and small; from whatever source it may proceed, —from within or from without, from GOD or from Satan, from those who love us or from those who hate us; caused by our own fault, or by the fault of others;—all are included in the great word "adversity." It is in that light that we will consider this passage.

I go further. I would include all that weariness which, slowly but surely, as the months roll by, increases upon those who are obliged to live much in what is commonly called the "world." Apart from all the evil of the world, judging no one, assuming that everything is perfectly innocent and according to the Mind of GOD,—and this is a large assumption,—still, the weariness does increase. The mothers, as they come back from watching over their daughters, night after night, in society; the elder girls, who are not

yet free to live out of the world, and yet are wearying of it; those who are not weary of it, and yet find it utterly unsatisfying:—all are included among those for whom the teaching of the Church in "the Visitation of the Sick" is intended, in its deeper and more general application.

Yes, and I go further still. I believe that all those tender words in the Bible which tell us how the LORD loves all who are in trial and trouble, and watches over them with a care beyond that of the mother watching by the sick-bed of her child, include those also who are spiritually in a transition-state. They include those who are blinded by "the god of this world;" hindered in their faith through the power of this present evil world: those who are seeking to know GOD'S Will, but who as yet do not see it clearly, and experience continual goadings of conscience; such as St. Paul felt, before his definite conversion, when he found it "hard to kick against the pricks." In those strange periods of mingled recklessness and utter sadness of heart, through which so many in every age have passed, there is a far more tender Eye than any human eye watching over them; a watchful Providence around them, and above them, and with them, at every turn of the daily life; speaking to them in accents unheard save by the inner conscience, in the silent chamber of the soul.

And so, in the words that I have to speak to you to-day, I would take "adversity"—pain and weakness and weariness and suffering—in the widest and most comprehensive sense.

"Ye have *forgotten* the exhortation which speaketh unto you." The Greek word is very strong; ye have *completely* forgotten! It must have slipped out of your mind altogether, or you would not be so upset by the troubles that have come upon you. You have been unmindful of the exhortation that speaketh unto you, as unto sons.

The word "exhortation" (παρακλήσεως) is a kindred word to that by which the Office of the Blessed SPIRIT is described; the "Paraclete."* You have forgotten the word of the "Comforter," —the "Advocate," Who is summoned to your aid; Who is sent by GOD to strengthen you, to encourage you, to cheer you, to brace you up for the great battle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. It is one of the family of words so often found in the New Testament, which mingle the idea of cheering, comfort, and help, with that of the pouring in of invigorating strength and force, to enable us to quit ourselves like men.

The quotation is from the Old Testament; Proverbs iii. 11, 12. Here, in passing, we are reminded how those Books of the Bible which seem, to many who pride themselves on their spirituality, the least "profitable," are used by the HOLY GHOST, and are found to contain the germs of the deeper Gospel teaching. The Book of Proverbs; how few care to study it! Yet, from one chapter in that book, comfort has been drawn by the Blessed SPIRIT for the tried and suffering children of GOD, in every age and every land. "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which

* St. John xiv. 16, 26.

speaketh to you as unto children: *My son, despise not thou the chastening of the* LORD, *nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.*"

The word "chastening" (παιδείας) is the same word as that which is translated "nurture," in the Epistle to the Ephesians, when speaking of bringing up children.* It relates to the office of a father, and is drawn from a word that in the Greek means a child, or son. It is perhaps best translated by the word "education;" fatherly education, "Whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth;" *i. e.*, disciplines, educates by suffering.

"My son, *despise* not thou the chastening of the LORD." Despise it not; that is, do not think little of it; do not take it as a matter of course. GOD Himself is near to you, in the trial. "It is GOD's Visitation."

"Nor *faint*, when thou art rebuked of Him." The same thought is brought out in an earlier verse of this chapter. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and *faint* in your minds."

"Faint not, when thou art *rebuked* of Him." The literal meaning of that word "rebuked" is —to convince or to convict of sin; to bring things to our mind that would not have been brought to our mind, if we had been allowed to go on rejoicing in our strength.

"For whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth; and scourgeth *every* son whom He receiveth." The LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, as Man, "learned obedience by the things which He suffered."†

"If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with

* Eph. vi. 4. † Heb. v. 8.

you as with *sons*." He is revealing Himself to you, in a fatherly capacity; He is dealing with you as a father with a son.

"For what *son* is there, whom his father chasteneth not?" What son is there, who is not educated by his father with a parental discipline sometimes involving disappointment, or pain, or annoyance, or trouble? Who has ever passed through the discipline of home life,—if he had a "father" worthy of the name,—without often having his own inclination thwarted, and things said to him at times that were disagreeable,—perhaps unintelligible? The father's wisdom and experience could not all at once be taken in, by the son. He had need of faith in the character of the father; in the father's wisdom, and in the father's love.

Other portions of Holy Scripture bring out the same teaching; for instance, 1 St. Peter iv. 12; and Rev. iii. 19, where the Lord Jesus Christ speaks in His ascended glory. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

Let us gather a few thoughts, in conclusion.

I. We do not know *why* the trial comes. We do not know why we are allowed to be wasting our strength—as it appears to us—on trifles; why we are allowed to suffer, in body, mind, or spirit; why it is that things come to us which seem really to weaken our powers of usefulness, and to bring no good results to us or to any-one else. We do not know "for what cause" the trial is sent to us. And so we go back to that teaching of the Prayer-Book, in its calm, quiet,

sober, solemn utterance of the mystery of life and the Wisdom of GOD. "Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty GOD is the LORD of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining: as youth, strength, health; age, weakness, and sickness."

Observe, in passing, how the Prayer-Book does not fall into the mistake of so many books, in ascribing to GOD only trial and sorrow and pain; ignoring this fact, that the youth, strength, and health, have also been His blessed gifts.

"Therefore, whatsoever your sickness is,"—whatsoever your adversity may be,—"know you certainly, that it is GOD'S Visitation." Without GOD'S ordering, it could never have come to you.

And then the Exhortation proceeds: "For what *cause* soever this sickness is sent unto you," &c. This is the point on which I desire to fix your attention; the way in which the Prayer-Book pronounces no opinion, as to the "cause" of the trial. It does not intrude into GOD'S province. It does not attempt to decide whether we are in the condition of those blinded ones in the church of Laodicea, who needed to be convinced of sin;* or whether we are in the position of the advanced Christians described elsewhere, who rejoiced in being allowed—as the climax, so to speak, of their spiritual life—to suffer with CHRIST, and to be "made conformable to His Death."†

The Prayer-Book leaves it with the all-seeing

* Rev. iii. 17.

† Rom. viii. 17. Phil. i. 29, 30; ii. 17, 18; iii. 10. Col. i. 24. 1 St. Peter i. 6; iv. 13.

God. He alone knows the "cause;" He alone knows why the trial is sent. It may be "to try your patience for the example of others, that your faith may be found, in the Day of the Lord, laudable, glorious, and honourable; to the increase of glory and endless felicity." Or else, it may be sent unto you "to correct and amend in you whatsoever doth offend the eye of your heavenly Father." God alone knows *why* it has come. Your enemies may think, as they did in the case of David, that it is sent as a punishment, when it is really a reward for devotion of heart and life. Or your friends may flatter you, and think that it is sent because you are a great saint, when it is really sent, in order to burn out some contemptible bit of dross that remained in your soul.

Or it may be simply because we are partakers of a fallen humanity. "We know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* This part of God's great Kingdom, as separated from the world of angels, of unfallen spirits,—this world, which is stained with evil, impregnated with sin,—the whole of this material universe—is to be eventually purified with fire. Why then, as the Apostle says, should we wonder if the trial, the purifying, the testing, begin with the Church of Jesus Christ? Every human being, from the mere fact of his humanity,—supposing even that from childhood he had never

* Rom. viii. 22, 23.

done anything that he knew to be wrong, must be purified and made ready for the Kingdom of God, through pain of some sort; bodily, mental, or spiritual. We are all alike partakers of the lot of a fallen humanity; and therefore it is very important that we should know how to deal with trial, when it comes to us.

But one thing is certain, the Church continues: "Know you certainly, that if you truly repent, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in God's Mercy, for His dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, and"—when you are able, though it may not be possible, at first,—"render to Him humble *thanks* for His Fatherly Visitation, submitting yourself wholly unto His Will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto Everlasting Life."

Observe the wonderful simplicity of this Exhortation; the reverent attitude of the Church, at the feet of God. Like the wife, who does not understand all that her husband does, and yet believes that all is right; so the Church, rising out of the miserable atmosphere of many religious books, speaks of God's dealings as a mystery. Submit yourselves wholly unto His Will; leave it to God to tell you, afterwards, "for what cause" the trial has come; be patient; repent; believe; thank God, as soon as the power to thank Him comes: and then, "it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting life."

II. See how the work of the Holy Spirit is

brought out in these verses. The word "exhortation," as I have already said, is one of a family of words that especially belong to the HOLY SPIRIT. And the word, "*rebuked* of Him," is the same word that our LORD used when He said that when the HOLY SPIRIT came, He should "*convince* the world of sin." Trouble, of whatever kind, is one of the means by which GOD reveals Himself to us. The HOLY SPIRIT is beginning to work in us, when in any way we are being taught that this life is not satisfying. Therefore, it is a very solemn time in our lives,—this "Chastening of the Lord." "Surely the LORD is in this place."

III. The whole passage takes for granted, and presses upon us, that we are receiving all this education, because we are "sons;" in virtue of our adoption into the Family of GOD. Dwell on those words: "Father,"—"Son." Say to yourself: "It is my 'Father.' It is as a 'son' that He is dealing with me. Whatever the object of the trial may be,—whatever evil may have been found in myself that made it necessary,—however tangled may be the web of my life,—however unable I may be, as yet, clearly to perceive what things I ought to do,—at whatever point in the spiritual life I may be,—still, it is a 'Father' who is dealing with me now, in this trial. Be it great or small, known to the world, or hidden from every human being, it is a Father dealing with a son."

IV. Let us, in conclusion, be very watchful,

to avoid the twofold danger which is here brought out by the HOLY SPIRIT.

1. *Despising* the chastening of the LORD; thinking too little of the trial; ignoring the Presence of the HOLY SPIRIT, while we are passing through it, or after we are delivered from it;—for perhaps there is even more danger afterwards, than at the time, with some souls.

2. *Fainting*, when rebuked by Him: being crushed by the trial: losing heart and hope, faith and patience; becoming discontented, rebellious, melancholy, miserable.

"*Despise* not the chastening of the LORD!" How often we see persons pass through every kind of trial, illness, bereavement, broken constitutions, bankruptcy, everything, and yet rise up again! We cannot help admiring the fortitude and courage with which they rise over every wave of trial. But it is simply *natural* power, lifting the natural man; there is an utter ignoring of the inner Presence of GOD the HOLY GHOST. "The Chastening of the LORD" is not recognized.

And yet, believe me, nothing "adverse" that happens to us,—nothing that worries or disappoints us,—nothing which is contrary to our wishes, temporal or spiritual, from the greatest temptation down to the tiniest worry of daily life,—can be taken out of the category of GOD's fatherly discipline. The great GOD is laying His Hand upon us, saying, "My son, this is not thy home; this transitory life can never satisfy thy immortal spirit, which I have created for Myself. Lift up thine eyes, and look for the Coming of

the King, Who alone can restore all things, and make all things perfect."

My brother, thy Father is calling for thee. There is an education to be done within thy spirit, in that sick room, or in that worrying outer life. Is it being wrought out? "The fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness," &c. Are you becoming more loving, more kind, more gentle, as the LORD GOD dwells more with you and touches you, in this trouble? Are you more joyous inwardly, even while the outer joys seem gone for ever? Is there more of the joy of the HOLY SPIRIT? Is there more peace? Is there more longsuffering with others; more gentleness, more patience with their little worrying ways? "The fruit of the SPIRIT,"—are you bringing it forth?

"DESPISE NOT THOU THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD."

II.

FRIDAY EVENING, JULY 2nd, 1880.

HEBREWS XII. 5, 6, 7.

WE considered last time, very briefly, the first of the two dangers in times of trial: "*Despise* not thou the chastening of the LORD." To-night, we consider the second danger: "Nor *faint*, when thou art rebuked of Him."

The word "rebuked" is the same that is used in St. John's Gospel, when speaking of the man who hates the light, and hides himself from GOD and from his fellow-creatures, "lest his deeds should be *reproved;*" *i. e.*, revealed, or laid bare. It is also, as we saw last time, the word used by our Blessed LORD, when describing the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* It conveys, in that passage, the idea of so rebuking another,—with such an effectual wielding of the victorious weapons of the Truth,—as to

* St. John iii. 20; xvi. 8.

bring him, either in respect of sin or of righteousness or of judgment, if not always to a confession, yet at least to a conviction, of his sin.

So, if we read the passage before us in the light of this promise of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, it would seem to teach us that we are not to "faint" when, by the power of the Blessed SPIRIT, GOD is laying hold of our spirit; when He is bringing home to us our sin, and the righteousness of our GOD and SAVIOUR; when He is enabling us, by any sore discipline, by any part of His Fatherly education, to balance aright the relative proportion of things temporal and eternal. We are not to faint, when GOD is bringing us, in fact, to see ourselves,—not, as we have been accustomed to regard our hearts and lives, in the light of the world by which we are outwardly surrounded, but in the light of the world unseen.

And what a true description, my brethren, is sketched out for us by this word "rebuke,"—reprove, convince, reveal! How different our past life appears, when we are thus "rebuked of Him!" How differently we judge ourselves! How differently we estimate the opinion of the "world;" whether it be that of the outer world, or of the little coterie of the inner and more spiritual society whose opinion we value! The world, with its wealth, secular or spiritual; its prizes, whether of the market-place or of the sanctuary; how small do they appear! And all that is of GOD and Heaven, how infinitely great!

I. It is a very *solemn* time. It is none other than the house of God, the gate of Heaven. The immediate Presence of God, in itself, is always overpowering. You may remember how the Bishops of the Church in South Africa tell us that when new converts are taught Sacramental Truth, it is sometimes more than they are able to bear; that positive physical depression and bodily weakness ensue, as the result of the overpowering weight of the Presence of God, suddenly revealed.

II. It is a very *trying* time, in whatever form the "rebuke" may come. I am not speaking merely of bodily sickness. It is a very trying time, when we see "failure" written upon our work, our prayers, our life; and know that the life is quickly slipping away from under us, however strong and well we may feel; that the years are few, and the ground which has to be covered, very large. It is a trying time, to be bankrupt: whether of money, or health, or popularity; or, still worse, of *spiritual* wealth,—conscious nearness to God, and the like.

It is a trying time; and therefore the Holy Spirit, Who dwelleth in us and knoweth whereof we are made, bids us here, by the voice of the Apostle, not to "faint" when we are rebuked of God.

That word "*faint*" is suggestive. It is the same word that we find in St. Matthew ix. 36. "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they *fainted*, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no

shepherd." And then came that mysterious command; instead of what, as it appears to us, would have been such an easy exercise of power for the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Instead of supplying every need Himself, He said to His disciples: "Pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." In other words: "My FATHER is waiting and working, and I am working and waiting. We only need fellow-workers, whom We can fill with the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, to heal every disease, to undo every evil which Satan has wrought in this world that he has enthralled."

In the eighth chapter of St. Mark, we find the word again; in that wonderful picture of the Compassion of JESUS, and of His tender, minute knowledge of all the details about that great crowd. "They have been with Me three days." How accurate was the diary!—They have "nothing to eat." How He had watched them!—"If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will *faint* by the way; for divers of them came from far." And then came those words,—the symbol of life in every age and every land, apart from the Presence of the Blessed SPIRIT revealing the LORD JESUS,—"Whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" The echo comes back from that hollow shore and that dreary sandy desert: "Whence?"

The same word comes again in the Epistle to the Galatians; leading us on to the next thought. The Apostle is evidently afraid of the effect of all this discipline of GOD; so he warns

them, saying: "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, *if we faint not.*" He knew that it was a trying time, as well as a solemn time.

Those words of the Psalmist are true, at such a time: "Thy Hand is heavy upon me, day and night. Thine arrows stick fast in me." How wonderful, that a man, filled by the HOLY SPIRIT, thousands of years ago, in that little land of Palestine, should write words that express the needs and the aspirations of humanity, in this nineteenth century! We could not have anything that more simply describes what hundreds of Christians are feeling, to-night. "Thine arrows stick fast in me; and Thy Hand presseth me sore. I am feeble, and sore smitten; my heart panteth; my strength hath failed me." "When Thou with rebukes"—whatever form they may take—"dost chasten man for sin, Thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment."*

It is a trying time. The prophets, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, found it so. Their prophecies are full of it. Elijah found it so. "He went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers."† All the servants of GOD,—all the company of the prophets,—all the saints and martyrs and confessors,—all start with the idea that by the

* Ps. xxxii. 4; xxxviii. 2, 8, 10; xxxix. 12.
† 1 Kings xix. 4.

power of GOD they will conquer the world. And then, in the dark times when their own nothingness is revealed, and GOD is rebuking them, the miserable, heart-crushing thought takes possession of their inmost being: "It is no use; others in preceding ages have tried and failed; I am not better than my fathers."

And that is what our Blessed LORD Himself felt, over and over again, in the verity of His Human Nature. He felt the trial of long-continued trouble and depression, long-continued assaults from the world without, and the weakness of His own Human Nature within. JESUS was "weary" many a time, besides the hour that was spent with the poor woman of Samaria. Many a time besides that night in Gethsemane, we doubt not, He was "sorrowful and very heavy." Long, lonely nights they must have been, on that cold hill-side of Olivet; long weary hours, when all His tender pleading had only ended, apparently, in injuring the cause of His FATHER, and irritating the Scribes and Pharisees into yet more deadly opposition. Often, wearied in spirit and mind, as well as in body, must JESUS have been "sorrowful;" "tasting death;"—tasting the bitterness of every form of death, in order that He might be able to guide His Church in all her manifold difficulties, temptations, and adversities, "unto the end of the world."

III. It is a very *dangerous* time. There is great danger of losing heart, especially when the trial is of a spiritual kind; when temptation and

sin are so subtly intertwined, that we find it impossible to disentangle the one from the other; when we are not able to see clearly whether GOD is correcting us in order to bring some wickedness to our remembrance, or whether He is allowing us to be partakers of the Sufferings of JESUS CHRIST.

Part of our probation here is this:—never being perfectly certain that in any particular case we have formed a right judgment; and yet certain that, in the main, GOD the HOLY SPIRIT will guide us rightly through life. But this is more easy to speak about, than to realize in the darker times of life. The well-springs seem dried up, and GOD seems far away; and words singularly like those in the history of Job, come forth from our hearts, if not from our lips: "Curse GOD and die." Amalek smites us when we are "faint and weary," as he smote Israel of old."*

It was a dangerous time for King David, when Shimei began to curse him, and the royal heart, as we read, was "weary."† There is a great danger of falling away from our stedfastness; of giving it all up; of beginning to murmur, and becoming discontented and rebellious. Thus the children of Israel fell in the wilderness, and were destroyed of the destroyer. And the entire history of the Hebrews under the New Covenant, to whom this Epistle was first addressed, is a warning against the danger that attends us when the Hand of GOD is upon us. "Faint not, when thou art rebuked of Him."

* Job ii. 9. Deut. xxv. 17, 18. † 2 Sam. xvi. 5—8.

Now, very briefly, let me suggest some *remedies.*

I will not repeat what has been so often taught here: the obvious helps; the power of the Blood of CHRIST, shed for us on Calvary, as a weapon against Satan; of Bible promises and texts; of acts of intercession and of praise: the peculiar strength and blessing, at such times, of frequent Holy Communion; thoughts of the use that we may be to others afterwards, through the suffering, when we have been proved in the fire of trial,—when we shall be able to say to those who are in any trouble, "I have *felt* it;" not merely, "I know it, and have heard of it, and read about it."* I do not repeat all the teaching which has been already printed in our Bible-Class Notes and elsewhere, on "Hope," on "the Communion of Saints," on "the Power of Weakness," and "the Power of Suffering."

Without dwelling on all this, briefly let me suggest some helps to you, for your own consideration; only premising, that there are times when *nothing* helps, however helpful at other times.

First, mere *natural* remedies. If you study 1 Kings xix., you will observe how GOD, Who made the body, recognizes the body, in a way that "spiritual" people are very much inclined to forget. GOD never despises the body; He provided *food* for Elijah. And so, very often, proper food, suspension of habits of fasting, for a time; more rest, more sleep, a day's holiday, a few days out of London, less work, less inter-

* See 2 Cor. i. 4—6.

cession, less of the harder parts of the devotional life,—these are remedies; in other words, recognizing the *body*.

Then, to some persons, "Nature" is helpful; Nature, as seen in the country, or in the squares and parks of London; or Nature, as reproduced by those whom GOD has made skilful artists, and the like. Nature was one of the means that GOD used, in dealing with Elijah. You remember the great and strong wind and the earthquake, preparing the way for the still small Voice. "Consider the lilies," our LORD says; consider GOD's handiwork. Wonderful is the power upon our spirit, sometimes, of clouds, and trees, and flowers. They are as music played by an unseen and very tender hand, upon the immortal spirit of man. When the music sounds within, the evil spirit departs, and the calm of rest comes. Thank GOD for it. Thank Him, the true David, who charms away many a spirit of evil by those secondary means which in His Providence He has provided.

These natural helps and remedies are invaluable, provided that they are not used apart from CHRIST. The mistake made, in much of the common literature of the day, is the idea that any natural helps or remedies will have a real permanent effect in relieving trouble and depression, *in themselves*. They are only useful, permanently, when employed by one who is recognizing his position in CHRIST, and receiving them as gifts from the FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, to Whom his trouble has been told in Prayer.

III.

FRIDAY EVENING, 9th JULY, 1880.

HEBREWS XII. 5, 6, 7.

IN considering this passage, we are not taking into account, as yet, the peculiar personal power of Satan, apparently allowed by GOD, in causing suffering. We are not considering the difficult question as to the connection between sin and suffering; not because we ignore it, but because it is not the subject with which we are dealing at present. We have not touched upon those seasons of trial, so terrible to endure, in which no remedy seems to avail at all.

We began, last time, to consider some helps and remedies, natural and super-natural, at those periods when there is a danger of "fainting;" when life seems hardly worth the living.

For reasons that He does not always explain to us, GOD sees it necessary that we should pass through certain adversities or perplexities of different kinds; but during that period of

temptation and purification, He has provided for us manifold reliefs, which are often overlooked because they are so common-place.

The first suggestion—as to the helps provided for us in Nature, &c., was based upon the thought that GOD made the body.

The second is based upon the thought that GOD made the soul. To-day, we are to consider the helps which come to us through the "soul," in the two-fold division of Heart and Mind.

I. GOD has given us a Heart, with various affections and emotions: and GOD has provided for us means of deliverance, in acts of kindness to others, in works of mercy, in the society of little children, and so forth, when there is danger of fainting under the heavy Hand of GOD.

II. The same GOD who made the Heart made the Mind also; and study, mental study, whether of a secular or Biblical kind, is very helpful.

1. *Secular* study. Those who are living the "separate" life,—in Sisterhoods and so forth, should try to keep up any intellectual power that GOD may have given them; some one accomplishment, if possible. Young girls should be sheltered, after they leave the school-room, from the distracting influences of London, and form habits of mental study. For in after-life there come periods,—lasting often for long, even for years,—when nothing is so efficacious as hard mental effort; the bringing of another part of our being, different from the feelings, different from the more spiritual part of our humanity, to bear upon something that requires real mental

effort; some work, whether intellectual or practical, that takes our thoughts away from the subject on which they have been dwelling. Many who have passed through periods of sorrow will tell you how often this has been a help to them.

2. *Biblical* study; real hard head-work at the Bible; not merely spiritual meditation. Those who know the Greek will study their New Testament in the original. Others could take a special subject, such as the gradual education of the human race, or the gradual development of any character, and trace it throughout the Bible. Or try to master one of the Epistles of St. Paul. Try to have a clear grasp of the facts, in your mind; why he wrote it; when he wrote it; for whom he wrote it; where he diverged from the main object of the letter; what special truth is contained in that parenthesis; whether there is a subtle link, that the superficial student would have failed to see, between the parenthesis and the main current of the argument. The analysis of some of the Epistles, such as that to the Ephesians, is real and hard head-work; and there is nothing that balances the depression to which certain temperaments are always exposed, or which comes to certain persons at periods of great outward adversities, more than such study as this.

And now, passing on from body and soul to *spirit*, we will consider the more directly *spiritual* helps.

1. And here, first, I will mention the use of

the Psalms: to say the Psalms aloud; putting, if we like, "I" for "we;" "me" for "us;" substituting "Satan" for the "foes" that assailed the Psalmist. It is useful to keep a list of Psalms for certain emergencies, and to go to them as a matter of course; changing them from time to time, that we may not become formal.

To us, living under the Christian Covenant, GOD has been pleased, on account of the revelation of the Atonement of JESUS CHRIST, to give a deeper knowledge of our own guilt and unworthiness than was vouchsafed, or would have been safe, in the Old Testament. We should, therefore, do well, I think, in choosing the Psalms, to avoid those in which there is any appearance of self-justification. Job began in that spirit; but no peace came to him, till he had abhorred himself in dust and ashes. And it is very seldom, I think, that self-justification brings to us, living under the Gospel Covenant, much rest.

I have put down four Psalms, merely taken in order, as illustrations: Psalms xiii.; xvii. 6—9; xxii.; xxv. What, for example, really would help many, in all the varieties of the life of suffering, so well as this 13th Psalm? "How long wilt Thou forget me, O LORD? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I seek counsel in my soul, and be so vexed in my heart?" How wonderful it is, that a man, thousands of years ago, should anticipate the very difficulties that we have! How often we have wasted *weeks* in seeking counsel in our

own soul, and been vexed in our heart, with *talking to ourselves!*

"How long shall mine enemies triumph over me? Consider, and hear me, O LORD my GOD. Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death;" the second death, the spiritual death, the death of all the fair flowers of hope and heavenward aspiration and joyous service and thankful surrender.

"Lest my enemy say, I have prevailed against him; for if I be cast down, they that trouble me"—the principalities and powers of the Evil One—"will rejoice at it. But my trust is in Thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in Thy salvation."

The general characteristic of the Psalms is, that however depressing the commencement, they end with praise and thanksgiving. The HOLY SPIRIT seems gradually to raise up the heart, like the accompaniment of some beautiful instrumental music, so that the Psalmist almost invariably ends by praise and thanksgiving.

2. Another great help is the use of the Service for the "Visitation of the Sick;" in its widest application, as I explained at the beginning.

What better prayer can you have than this; altering the words, for your own use, as you go on? "O LORD, save me Thy servant; I put my trust in Thee. Let the enemy have no advantage of me; nor the Spirit of evil approach to hurt me. Be to me, O LORD, a strong tower from the face of my enemy. O LORD, hear my prayer: let my cry come unto Thee."

And then, how appropriate, to use in the same way, is the Psalm which comes in the "Visitation of the Sick!" "In Thee, O LORD, I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion; rid me and deliver me in Thy righteousness; incline Thine ear unto me, and save me. Be Thou my strong-hold, whereunto I may alway resort. Thou hast *promised* to help me! Through Thee have I been holden up, ever since I was born; Thou art He that took me out of my mother's womb;" appealing to GOD as a Creator. "I am become as it were a monster unto many: but my sure trust is in Thee. Forsake me not when my strength faileth me! For mine enemies speak against me,"—the spirits of evil, who long for my destruction; "they that lay wait for my soul take their counsel together, saying, GOD hath forsaken him; persecute him, and take him, for there is none to deliver him."

Perhaps we have had a long time of spiritual darkness; and then, there has come some outward difficulty; and our work has been too much for us; and then, perhaps, some-one has misunderstood us, and treated us unfairly. How, at such times, we almost *see* the spirits of evil all around, taking counsel and saying, "It was all a delusion; after all, he was *not* the son of GOD; GOD has forsaken him; persecute him, and take him; there is none to deliver him!" Each word is very wonderful.

And then that Blessing,—"The Almighty LORD, Who is a most strong Tower to all them that put their trust in Him," &c.,—is very useful,

turned into a prayer. It seems to brace the spirit, even while you say the words aloud. "O Almighty LORD, Who art a most strong tower to all that put their trust in Thee, to Whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore *my* defence. Unto Thy gracious Mercy I commit *myself;* O LORD, bless *me* and keep *me;* lift up the light of Thy Countenance upon *me,* and give *me* peace!" And so with all the Collects at the end of the Service. Take such a passage as this; from the "Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience." "O merciful GOD, give me a right understanding of myself, and of Thy threats and promises; that I may neither cast away my confidence in Thee, nor place it anywhere but in Thee. Give me strength against all my temptations; heal all my distempers; break not the bruised reed; quench not the smoking flax; make me to hear of joy and gladness, and give me peace, through the merits and mediation of JESUS CHRIST my LORD."

Or what more perfect sermon could there be, to read aloud to yourself, than this, from the "Exhortation" in that Service? "There should be no greater comfort, to *me,* than to be made like unto CHRIST, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory, before He was crucified. So truly *my* way to eternal joy is to suffer here with CHRIST; and *my* door to enter into eternal life is gladly to

die with CHRIST; that I may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in Everlasting Life."

3. The third help which I will mention is the *spiritual study of the Bible.* The intellectual method of study, already named, implies of course the use of a spiritualized intellect, beginning the study with prayer to GOD for His help. But in this spiritual study, we must more directly seek His help for our *spirit*, that highest part of our being, which communes with GOD, and which is directly operated upon by GOD the HOLY GHOST, in a more special manner than the other parts of our being.

On looking into the Bible, in this spiritual way, and finding what sort of feelings the Apostles had, and what was the experience of JESUS CHRIST Himself, there is a direct action of the HOLY SPIRIT upon our spirit. There grow up within us thoughts like those which the Blessed SPIRIT brought out for the strengthening of the early Church, in passages like these: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,"—or which is now trying you,—"as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of CHRIST'S Sufferings."* It is evident that St. Peter often used these thoughts to strengthen his own spirit, in his daily martyrdom. Again, in the next chapter, we read: "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world;" or, as it is in the

* 1 St. Peter iv. 12.

Greek, "the *brotherhood*" that is in the world; your brotherhood.*

As we look into the inner feelings of the Apostles, we find that St. Paul's experience is the universal testimony of the "brotherhood" of GOD's children. "Troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, cast down; always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS." These are very strong words, as you will see if you think what "the dying of the LORD JESUS" was; but the words were inspired by GOD the HOLY GHOST. And again: "We are always delivered unto death," day by day being given up to death, "for JESUS' sake.—Death worketh in us.—The outward man perisheth.—We groan, being burdened;" weighed down; "in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses; chastened, sorrowful, poor;" and seeming to have "nothing"—of earthly or spiritual good—to offer to our GOD.†

Or again: take the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There, we read of the noble army of Old Testament martyrs, and their sufferings; mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonments; stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; destitute, afflicted, tormented.

So, as we perceive that we belong to a world that in some strange way is altogether "out of course," a world wherein evil works and Satan reigns, there arises within us something of the spirit of "brotherhood;" we gain courage

* 1 St. Peter v. 9.

† 2 Cor. iv. 8—12, 16; v. 4; vi. 4, 9, 10.

to take that which is part of the lot of our brethren, who have been baptized into the same Army, and made members of the same Family of GOD.

And then, we rise to look at the Representative of this great Army; at Him Who was perfect, without spot or stain of sin; and that simple quaint old sermon in the "Visitation of the Sick" reminds us what *His* Life was; and the HOLY SPIRIT brings back to us the text at the beginning of this chapter: "Consider Him, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Nothing really helps us like considering *Him*. If HE bore this,—and *He* bore all that *you* have to bear,—if HE felt this,—and *He* felt all that *you* have to feel,—if GOD allowed His own SON to be scourged,—what son is there whom the FATHER scourgeth not?

I leave with you two passages that bring out, in the inspired language of the Bible, this third and last head.

Hebrews ii. 17, 18. "Wherefore it behoved Him in *all* things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be"—or, as it is in the Greek, that He might, as man, *become*—"a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to GOD.—For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Through the knowledge that He gained in His own times of darkness and trial and adversity, He is able to help those who are in any kind of trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other

adversity; as well as to *represent* them before His Father.

Hebrews iv. 15, 16. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,"—cannot sympathize with our weaknesses; but One Who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." That being so, there is no sin in being tempted. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The more we think, quietly, that GOD loved His SON JESUS CHRIST, Who was One with Him from all Eternity; and yet, that *He* "*suffered*," in all the manifold ways of suffering described in the Bible; in the widest application of the term; the more we feel that "it is enough for the servant to be as his Master." And we say to our own spirit, when it rises up in rebellion: "It is enough for the servant to be as his Master; be still; submit thyself to thy GOD."

And secondly, just as we feel drawn to those who have passed through similar trials to ours, because by an instinct we know that they can enter into what we are feeling;—because it requires no expression in words, to make us certain that they understand the suffering; so may we be certain that He Whom Satan would always hide from us, by the earth-born clouds of unbelief, *feels* for us. He numbers the very hairs of our head. He knows the source from which our trial comes, the reason for which it is allowed, the good that is to be brought out

of it, the deliverance that is ready. He sees the end, from the beginning; He sees the "way of escape," when we only feel surrounded on every side. He has compassion, because "He Himself hath suffered, being tempted."

IV.

FRIDAY EVENING, 16th JULY, 1880.

HEBREWS XII. 9—11. "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

I. THE first argument, in the passage before us, for submitting ourselves to GOD in any trial, is based on the fact that "chastening" is involved in the very idea of sonship. "For what *son* is he, whom the father chasteneth not?" If you are without this discipline,—of which all "sons," from JESUS CHRIST downwards, have become partakers,—"then are ye bastards, and not sons."

II. The second argument is given in the ninth verse. "We have had fathers of our *flesh* which corrected us"—educated us,—"and we

gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection"—submit ourselves—"to the Father of *spirits*, and live?"

The general ground of this appeal is obvious. It is evident that the higher the being, the greater the obligation for reverence. The claim of a Bishop is stronger than that of a mere priest. The claim of the Sovereign is higher than that of any subject. If therefore we reverence an earthly parent, much more should we submit with reverence to a Heavenly Father.

To sum up briefly all that is suggested for reflection, as distinguished from emotion, in this passage, I will read you the following words.

1. "God, as Father, is as much exalted above all earthly fathers, as a spirit is above the flesh, and a man's personal being above his natural existence.

2. "God is more to be honoured than any earthly parent, because the earthly father is such, only to this or that individual child; whereas God is the Father of the whole universe of spirits. All living existence, all independent life, all personal life,—whether that life be a bodily form of flesh and blood, like men, or a bodiless one, like the angels,—draws its origin from Him; and in order to exist, or exist aright, must submit itself to His fatherly discipline. For the human spirit is not an absolute principle of life in man, but one dependent on God, its Source. It lives only from Him, and with Him, and in Him. To submit ourselves to 'the Father of spirits' is an essential condition of our life;—life, true and abiding, not merely transient or apparent

life;—life in accordance with the true ideal of humanity, likeness to God, communion with Him."*

III. We pass on to the third argument. "They verily for a few days chastened us,"—*i. e.*, educated us, "after their own pleasure; but He, for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."

The idea of the words "after their own pleasure" is,—as seemed good to them; as they thought best; as they pleased, in the best sense of the word "pleased." It does not convey any idea of caprice. It simply means that they did the best they could.

In these few words, there are several striking contrasts between the education of any earthly parent, and the education of a heavenly Father. The contrasts are not worked out, but merely suggested, by the inspired writer of this Epistle. Let me draw them out for you in detail.

1. They chastened us "for a few days;" for a limited period; in the time of our youth; while we were subject to them, as children to parents. They chastened us (ἐπαίδευον) for a while; and what a short while it was! For what is our life? It is but a vapour. It is like the grass that in the morning is green and growing, but before night is cut down and withered. They educated us "for a few days;" but God, the Infinite, the Eternal One, is beginning with us an *eternal* education.

* *Delitzch on Hebrews. Vol. ii. page* 320, *third edition.*

2. They chastened us "after their own pleasure;"—according to what seemed good to them. It was but a changing and imperfect standard, even in the best of parents; while in some, alas! passion and self-will often depraved what in the ideal parent would have been a higher type of education. Our negligences and ignorances, however earnestly we have tried to rear our children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD, have, as we know, sadly marred our work. But the Heavenly Father educates in perfect Wisdom and perfect Love. In Him is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

3. The human parents only *intended* the good of their children. But the "Father of our spirits" has the power to carry His intentions into practice. What GOD wills, GOD does. The will and the act are synonymous, with "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity." GOD'S education is certain to lead to our good, unless deliberately hindered by the exercise of our free-will.

4. Observe the difference between the ultimate result of the education of even the most perfect parents you can imagine, and the result of GOD'S education of us. Even if our own ideal is fully realized, what is it compared with the realization of the ideal of the Divine Mind,—of the omniscient, incomprehensible Wisdom? His ideal is "that we should become *partakers of His Holiness.*"

See what four great contrasts are contained in those few concentrated words: "They verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure;

but He, for our profit, that we might be partakers of His Holiness."

Let us now compare with this verse some other passages of Holy Scripture.

1 St. Peter i. 6, 7. "Now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the Appearing of JESUS CHRIST."

1 St. Peter v. 10. "The GOD of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

2 St. Peter i. 4. He has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises," that we may become "partakers of the Divine Nature."

Colossians i. 28. "That we may present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS:"—this is the object of the preaching and the warning and the teaching and the correction which we receive. To be holy, as GOD is holy; to be perfect, as GOD is perfect: that is the ultimate end of all the hard battles that men and women have to fight with the world and the flesh and the Devil. That is the end and aim of all the hard battling with their lower natures; of standing alone in defence of what is right: of taking the unpopular line, and witnessing for GOD; of patiently bearing all the trial, whether it be in the active or the suffering life:—to be "perfect," at last; to be holy, at last!

Take but one single instance, closely linked

with the chapter that we are considering. The LORD has told us that we are to be merciful, not for any lower motive, but because our FATHER in Heaven is merciful. He never takes a lower ground than that; we are to be like our Father. We are to forgive, because GOD forgives; we are to love, because our Father loves. We are to shower down mercy on those who have injured us, because our Father sends the sunshine and the gentle rain upon the just and upon the unjust, on the evil and the good.

Suppose that the end of a long life of trial were this; that we learned to be compassionate,—as JESUS learned compassion, in His Human Nature, by suffering:*—if in even that single thing we learned to copy our FATHER in Heaven, would not that be enough to compensate us for a life-long affliction?

And it is very remarkable, when you watch the lives of others, as years roll on, to see how those who have never had to pass through much trial are hard in their judgment on others. You may have noticed it in some person who was upright and irreproachable, and who perhaps was never misunderstood, and who never had one breath of slander cast upon him, but went on triumphantly rejoicing, like Job in his integrity. And you may have noticed how, after the time of trial came,—such as CHRIST bore when He was wrongly accused,—there came also a gentleness, a conscious dependence upon others, a realization of how much every-one on earth depends upon the brotherhood of CHRIST, with which we are linked

* Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15; v. 2.

by eternal ties. So there sprang up more sense of the need of others; more readiness to sympathize with others, and to cultivate friendly relations with them.

So also with sorrow, of every kind;—unless the sorrow hardens and embitters the heart, and develops a complaining, murmuring spirit, defeating the whole object of GOD in the trial. Unless the Will of GOD is thus deliberately defeated, it is very beautiful to watch some of the older saints, those who through the discipline of three score years and ten have been purified; the gentleness, the compassion, the tender power to make allowance for others. Is not that something,—to have learned, in one point at least, to imitate GOD; to be merciful, even as our FATHER in Heaven is merciful?

Here let me say, that this is the really noble end of life; *not*—to have sweet religious reveries; *not*—to have comfort,—though we may thank GOD when the comfort comes; *not*—to sit down hereafter with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, although that is a legitimate object for our ambition and our prayers; but—to become like GOD; to look up to that Being of unspeakable Power and Wisdom and Love, and to know that hereafter, GOD helping us, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."* We shall have gained a similarity to GOD which will enable us to look into that Nature, which at present we are simply powerless to appreciate and understand.

Think over this verse for yourselves. It is

* 1 St. John iii. 2.

one of the most deep and wonderful texts in the Bible. "Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when HE shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." A person cannot "see" another,—cannot appreciate or understand another, of a high and pure and holy nature,—till he has risen in some measure to the level of the high and pure and holy nature that he is contemplating. A selfish person cannot understand an ungrudging character. A narrow mind cannot understand a large comprehensive intellect. So, the hope that one day we shall see GOD implies that we shall be "like Him;" and the end and aim of our life is to become, through any discipline that GOD may appoint, holy as HE is holy, perfect as HE is perfect. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as HE is pure."*

IV. We pass on to the next point, the fourth argument. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Observe how this thought is brought out in the Service for the Visitation of the Sick. "Know certainly, that if you truly repent you of your sins, and bear your sickness patiently, trusting in GOD'S Mercy, for His dear Son JESUS CHRIST'S sake, submitting yourself wholly unto His Will, it shall turn to your profit, and help you forward in the right way that leadeth unto everlasting

* 1 St. John iii. 2, 3. St. Matt. v. 8.

life.—CHRIST Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory, before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with CHRIST; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with CHRIST; that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life."

That word translated "exercised" is a very strong word. It means "trained in the gymnasium;" trained, as wrestlers and runners in a race are trained.

You can study these parallel passages, at your leisure. 1 Timothy iv. 7. Hebrews v. 14. Romans v. 3—6.

Two thoughts are here suggested.

1. What a picture of life it gives us, this word "exercised!' If a man is being trained at Oxford for the race with Cambridge, he is called at a certain hour in the morning; he must get up, and run a certain distance; all day, he must eat nothing but a certain amount of food, and be limited as to the kind of food; he must submit to rules, in everything; even on a hot summer's day, he must not touch anything that he likes, but must eat and drink simply what is prescribed. "Now they do it," as St. Paul says, "to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible."* This is the only picture of life that the Bible endorses; a great *training-time* for that glorious end.

Here let me say,—without entering into the question of human discipline, of self-chastening penances, which is a difficult subject,—that there

* 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.

is a great danger in the burdens that we bind upon ourselves, or even the burdens that are bound upon us by those whose opinion we value. There is always danger; liability to err, liability to exaggeration, liability to unworthy motives, and the like. I am not disparaging these burdens; I am only saying that they are dangerous, and require much guarding. But any "adversity," of whatever kind,—anything that seems to hinder us, anything that we dislike, in our Church, in our parish, in our home, in our own individual souls; any trial, whether within or without, is from GOD, or allowed by GOD. It is "GOD's Visitation." We cannot go wrong, when it is GOD's yoke which is laid upon us, if we drink in the Bible teaching, as interpreted for us by our Prayer-Book, in the "Visitation of the Sick:" submitting to GOD's Hand, it must "turn to our profit," sooner or later. We are perfectly safe, there. GOD ALMIGHTY has allowed it. He is training us for a glorious end: "His servants shall serve Him." We desire nothing higher than to be made fit to be door-keepers in the everlasting Kingdom. If, in all our life, we only learn the office of a "door-keeper," to sit still and be quiet, to wait and to watch, the life will not have been wasted.

It is this thought which will reconcile many to living, who are tired of life. There is so much to be done within us, yet! There are many courses, in the great training-school of GOD's elect; and he must be strangely ignorant of his own state, who fancies that he has already learned all that GOD can teach him by trial and discipline.

God forbid that any of us should say, "I need no more discipline."

For aught that we know, the discipline of pain, of trial, of disappointment, is entirely limited to this earth. It is probable that the education after death is the education of joy and brightness in the sunshine of the Father's Love, and that we shall never have again the opportunity which God is giving us here, of the education of trial, pain, restraint, limitation, failure, bereavement.

2. The second thought is this:—the *Tenderness* of God, as exhibited in this passage.

How different from the teaching of many religious books, is the standard of the Prayer-Book and Bible! How many good biographers seem to feel that it is a matter of loyalty to the persons whose life they are recording, to leave on our minds the impression that when they were sore tempted, enduring great bodily suffering, or some very hard trial, such as misrepresentation and slander, they were *feeling* happy; persuaded in their minds that it was a very enjoyable period through which they were passing!

It is true that there are often times of strange exultation, in the midst of the most agonizing sorrow, and the most fiery temptations, and the most awful agony. The saints of God have continually experienced such times; not only the more advanced saints, but even those who are mere beginners in the school of affliction. God can give that experience; but there is nothing in the Bible to warrant the assumption that it is a mark

of weakness, to *feel* the pain and the trial and the temptation. "No chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous."

Observe the Tenderness of GOD. The Bible recognizes the facts of life, and helps us to deal with those facts in the best way. And so, here, the Bible recognizes the facts of human experience. "For the present," while it lasts, in this transitory scene, it does not appear to be a thing of joy, but of pain. This is the literal translation.

"Nevertheless, *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby;" to those who have been trained through it. It *gives back* peaceable fruit, as the *reward*. We need not be afraid of the word "reward," if we use it in the scriptural sense.

We see, then, the Tenderness of GOD, in describing chastening, not as a thing of joy, but of pain.

Take these two texts: St. Matthew xxvi. 38, St. John xii. 27; and compare with that experience of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the experience of all the Apostles and Saints in the Bible. You find, in all of them, a quiet recognition of the fact that pain is pain, and that trial—whether of body, heart, mind, or spirit—is hard to endure. The soul of the sinless CHRIST was "sorrowful, and very heavy." "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with Me." Though He was without sin, our Divine Elder Brother was not ashamed of saying this, to the disciples whom He was bracing for the

same warfare, and the same hard endurance, which is the lot of every child of a fallen humanity.

Thank GOD, that He Whom we have to follow has been, "in all things, made like unto His brethren;" and that the FATHER of our spirits —to Whom we have to render the account,—by Whose standard alone, as expressed in Holy Scripture and formulated for us in our Prayer-Book, we are hereafter to be judged,—has said: "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." He, your GOD and FATHER, recognizes the fact.

Only, remember also,—and therefore be brave; or rather, pray Him to make you brave;—remember, with thankfulness, that "afterward" it will yield, to those who have submitted themselves, and who have allowed GOD to be the Educator of their lives, "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

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